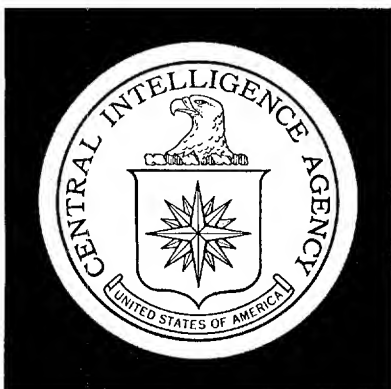


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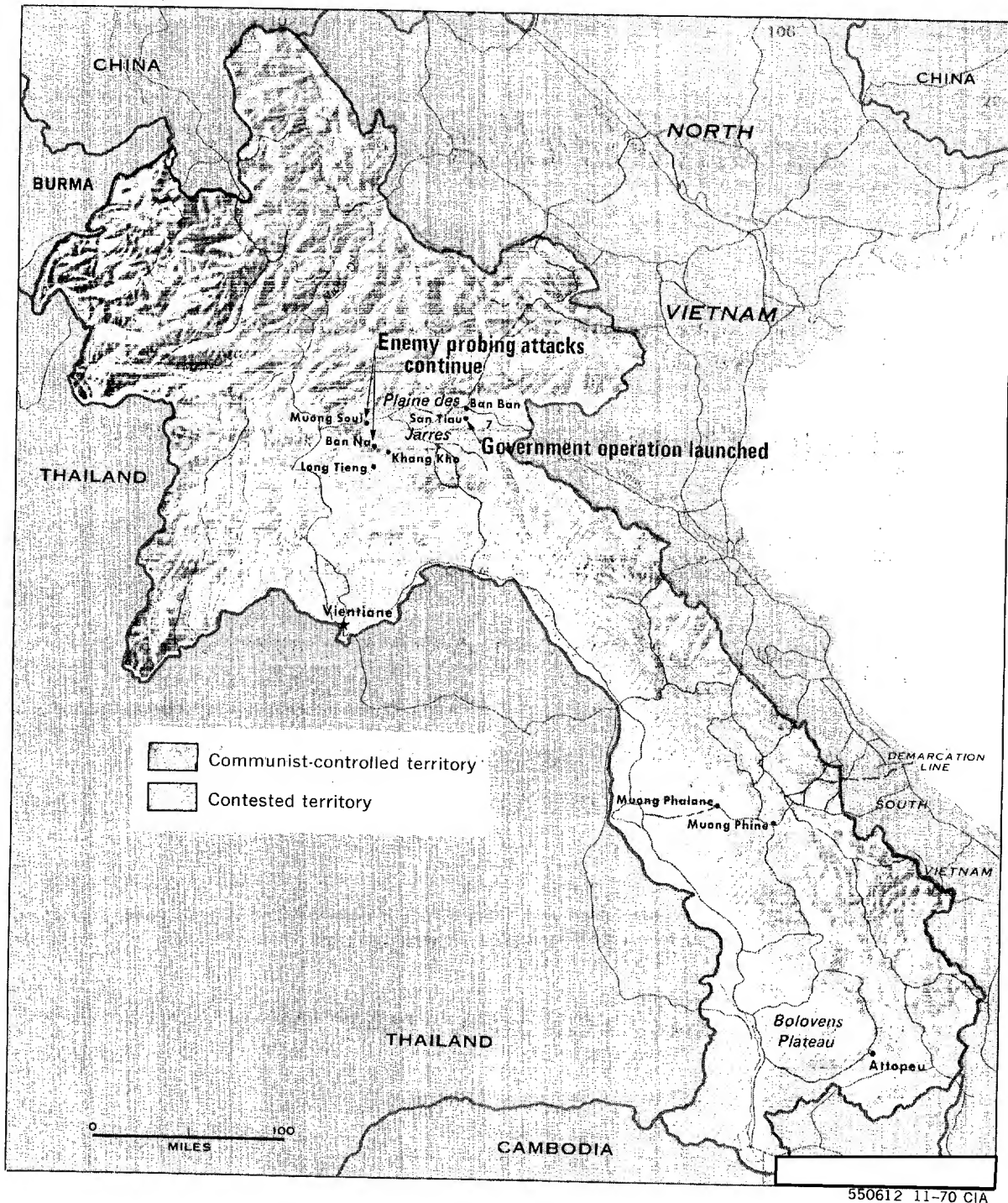
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LAOS: Current Situation



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LAOS: A large-scale government operation has begun in northern Laos near the Communist logistics center at Ban Ban.

A force of almost 1,000 irregular troops from Long Tieng and Khang Kho was airlifted into an area south of San Tiau, some ten miles south of Ban Ban, on 27 and 28 November. Initial reports indicate that attempts by the irregulars to secure San Tiau were met with enemy mortar and recoilless rifle fire. No casualties resulted, however. The presence of government troops in this sensitive sector should help to disrupt enemy supply efforts into the Plaine des Jarres and, consequently, the Communists can be counted on to react sharply to this operation.

In the meantime, southwest of the Plaine, the enemy continues to put pressure on government outposts around Ban Na. Only one outpost was abandoned by irregular troops in scattered weekend clashes, however, and government losses were minimal. Elsewhere, small enemy probing attacks on 26 and 27 November against a government position on the outskirts of Muong Soui were repulsed quickly.

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Current Situation



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CAMBODIA: [Large numbers of government troops continue to be tied down by Communist pressure against major lines of communication.]

[Cambodian forces still have not been able to break the enemy's hold over sections of Routes 6 and 7 in Kompong Cham Province. Three government battalions and a battery of 105-mm. howitzers were sent from Skoun south to Phaav on Route 6 on 28 November to try to reopen that road from Phaav to the Spean Dek bridge. At the same time, another battalion stationed at the bridge was to move north to link up with the troops from Skoun.]

[Enemy harassing attacks and ambushes against government positions along Route 4 in the Kirirom area have inflicted heavy casualties on the Cambodians, apparently forcing them to abandon temporarily their push to clear that important highway. No government operations were scheduled yesterday, and it is not clear what Phnom Penh's next military moves will be in this sector.]

[Senior government commanders in the northwest are trying to get together to organize a new operation to recapture the town of Puok, ten miles west of Siem Reap city on Route 6. This operation may include three battalions that recently completed training in Thailand and are now in Battambang city, and elements of a government brigade in Siem Reap city. Government soldiers succeeded in reopening the road between Siem Reap and its airfield on 28 November.]

[Since their current campaign against vital roadways began on 9 November, the Communists have capitalized effectively on the Cambodian Army's inexperience and lack of mobility. Through a series of selected ambushes and harassing attacks, involving small units, they have put the government back on the defensive and interrupted traffic on most of the country's main highways.]

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[In areas around Phnom Penh, minor enemy actions continue to be reported. No significant Communist advances toward the capital itself are evident, however. Government sources in Phnom Penh have told the press that a dusk-to-dawn curfew will be instituted in the city today. This step appears to be aimed at reducing the chances for additional terrorist incidents.]



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EAST GERMANY - WEST GERMANY: The anxiety and uncertainty of the East Germans over developing pressures on their policy toward Bonn apparently were behind their obstruction of progress at the first working-level meeting with the West Germans last Friday.

An East German slowdown has caused long tie-ups for West German travelers to and from the city of Berlin. Ostensibly, this harassment is intended to display East German displeasure at the prospect of a meeting of West German Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) parliamentary deputies in West Berlin, which is scheduled for today and tomorrow.

The East Germans hold that such political activities in the city are illegal, and that they are entitled to attempt to prevent them by their "sovereign" control of access to Berlin. The Soviets support them in this position.

The issue of East Germany's reluctant attitude toward the talks with Bonn should be central to the expected Warsaw Pact summit review of the Berlin talks and Bonn's Ostpolitik that is reportedly to take place in East Berlin on 2 December. Speaking in Soviet Armenia yesterday, Soviet party leader Brezhnev expressed a constructive view of the settlement of questions affecting West Berlin, indicating that it is necessary for all interested parties to display good will. Brezhnev indicated a continuing commitment to the four-power talks on Berlin. Nevertheless, he also indicated he would support East Germany's "legitimate interests and sovereign rights," a phrase which could be read as backing for East German warnings that the Soviets might join in the harassment of West Berlin during the CDU/CSU meeting. Brezhnev's phrase, however, could also be interpreted to mean that there are limits on East German interests and sovereign rights, and that these may be at issue during the Warsaw Pact summit.

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Although the meeting between Chancellor Brandt's representative, Egon Bahr, and East German negotiator Kohl on the 27th made no progress, the talks were held in a businesslike manner and without polemics. Another session is considered likely before Christmas.

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UN - MIDDLE EAST: [Today's fund-pledging conference could determine the future of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides welfare services in the refugee camps of the Middle East.]

[The outlook for a successful resolution of UNRWA's financial difficulties is not good. Debate in the General Assembly on UNRWA has been less heated than it was last year, but the level of acrimony remains high. Arab delegates have not had much success in their efforts to generate interest in additional funds for the agency, and the Soviet Union has refused to alter its traditional policy of declining to offer support. Most Western governments are also chary of boosting UNRWA's funds.]

[The UNRWA comptroller believes the agency may not be able to meet its payroll beginning in January. The Arabs have warned of the "devastating repercussions" of a cutback in UNRWA's education program, which could drive up to 50,000 Palestinian teenagers into an even more active role in fedayeen organizations.]

[The government of Jordan may alleviate UNRWA's difficulties to some extent. Jordan has considered taking over some of the camp functions currently exercised by UNRWA. Such action would not only help financially, but would reduce allegations of UNRWA's liability for fedayeen utilization of the camps.]

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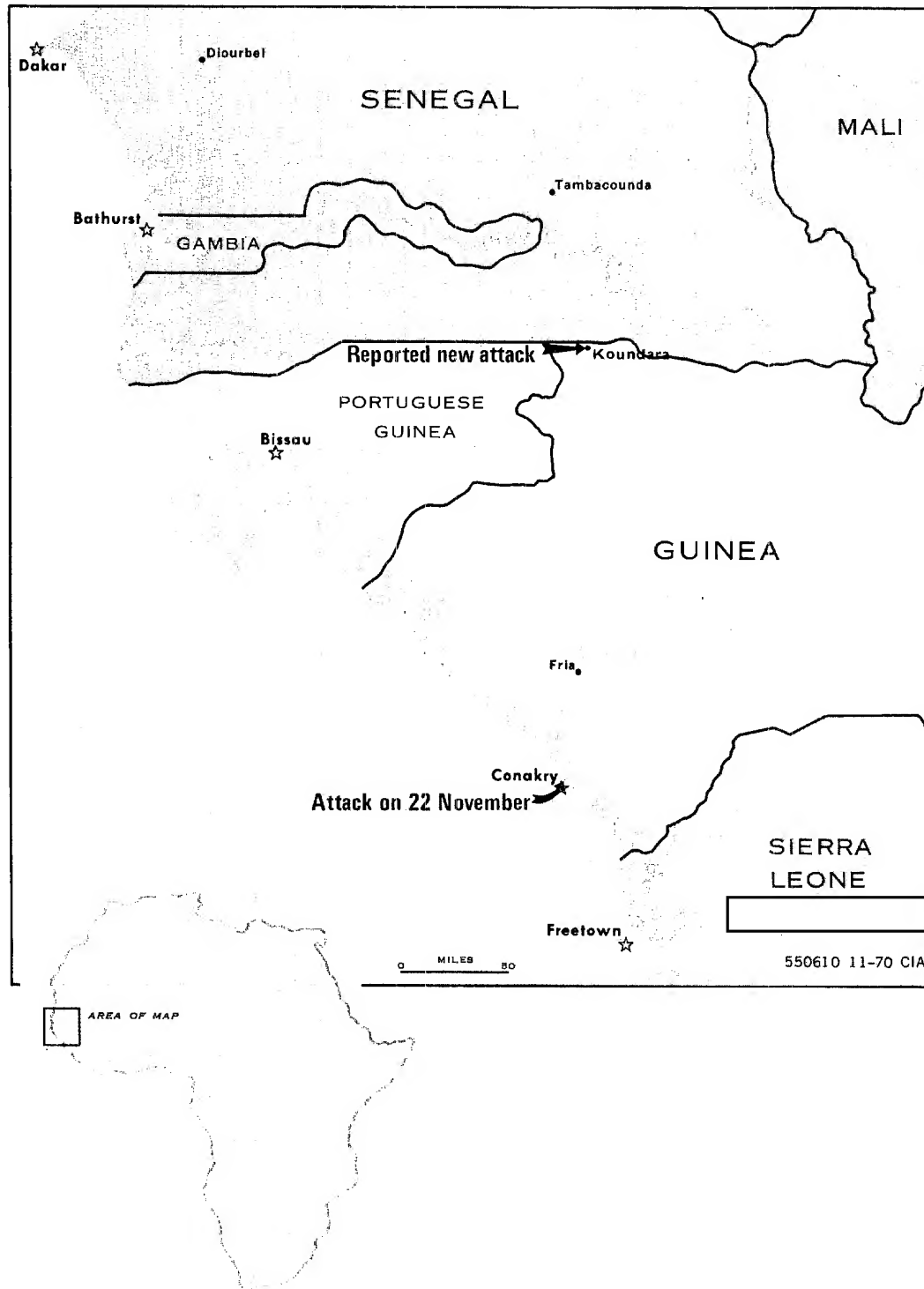
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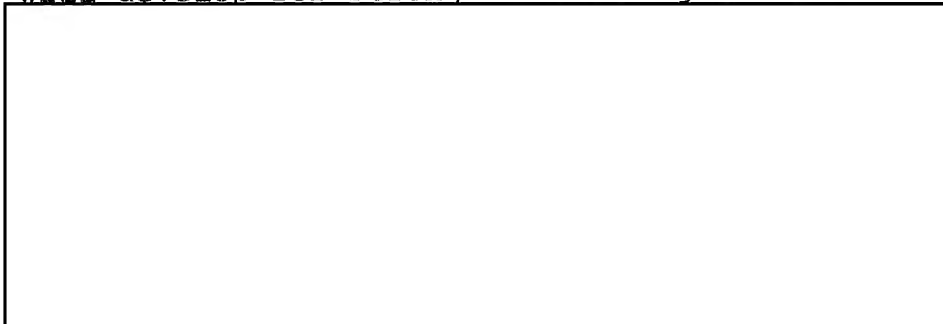
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GUINEA: Hostile elements, apparently supported by the Portuguese and based in Portuguese Guinea, staged an overland attack against an upcountry Guinean town late last week.

The target of the attack was Koundara, a town located about 20 miles east of Guinea's frontier with Portuguese Guinea and some 200 miles north of Conakry, Guinea's capital, which was struck by a seaborne commando force on 22 November. President Toure's government attributed the new attack to regular Portuguese troops, but it seems more likely that this incursion was carried out mainly by exiled Guinean opponents of Toure's regime supported by Lisbon. Radio Conakry has reported that regime defenders repulsed the attack, killing 36 and capturing a number of the invaders.

Meanwhile, some material aid from other countries has begun to arrive in Guinea in response to Toure's urgent appeals following the attack on Conakry. The government has announced receipt of "military assistance" from Algeria, and Libyan and Egyptian aircraft apparently have made a delivery, perhaps of the medical supplies Cairo had promised.

The special UN mission sent to investigate the first attack has returned to New York. Its report seems likely to incriminate Portugal and lead to an early Security Council session in which pressures will develop for strong measures against Lisbon.



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NOTES

ITALY: Prime Minister Emilio Colombo's successful vote of confidence on 28 November on tax aspects of his major economic bill drew clear battle lines between the Italian Communists and the four center-left government parties. The Communists were thus repulsed in their move to enhance their national political stature by amending the government's bill, a move which had had support from some Socialists and left-wing Christian Democrats. Chances for final parliamentary approval of the bill before the deadline of 24 December now seem much improved. Italy's first divorce legislation has been artificially tied to the economic decree and may now also receive early approval.

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